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In Ideological Transit: German Tourism to Denmark in the 1930s¹

Abstract: *This article investigates the relationships that resulted from large-scale travelling between different ideological systems, the experiences of everyday consumption in which they were part, and the development of German tourism to Denmark in the 1930s. To do so, it first outlines the international context for the transformation of European tourism and its organisations in the 1930s before placing the influx of German visitors to Denmark into this context. The article then investigates the scale of German travel to Denmark during that decade before considering the nature of the institutions that made it possible. Moreover, it reflects upon the social make-up of travellers, who made their way to Denmark and discusses the ways the Danish press as well as state-related institutions saw German tourists in ideological as well as non-ideological terms, reflecting how ideology and economics were intertwined as actors in the 1930s sought to make sense of the emerging mass consumerist society. Neither, the article argues, were ideological concerns central for most of the actors facilitating trips to Denmark nor were their visits overwhelmingly framed ideologically in the Danish press.*

Introduction

[In the 1930s] the brakes of tourism had been slammed on, [... since, among other things,] [i]n Germany, National Socialism's iron fist began to quench the freedom and wanderlust of the German people.
(Hans Joakim Schultz, in *Dansk Turisme i 100 år [Danish Tourism in 100 years]*)

The will to travel [to Denmark] has been so tremendous in Germany that it has gone well beyond the given limits in the Danish-German tourist agreement, meaning that the German authorities have been forced to 'take a small breather' before more hard currency is granted.
(From note entitled '45.000 Tyske Turister [45,000 German Tourists]' in the newspaper *Aftenbladet*, July 6, 1935)

The German tourist will find cheap treats for a travel snack
And many a brave Nazi, journeying by railroad track
back to the swastika flags
will make in their diary praising remark
of 'die Herrliche Reise – und Dänemark!'
(Verse from satirical poem in the newspaper *Dagens Nyheder*, June 14, 1935. Translated by Lise H. Rasmussen)

¹ This article is a modified version of the first chapter of my MA thesis: "'In wenigen Stunden dort': The Tourist Association for Denmark and Its Promotional Efforts in Nazi Germany, 1929-1939'. (Masters thesis, Central European University, 2017). Parts of this article were presented as part of a paper given at the *GRACEH 2017* conference on 'Beyond Established Narratives' at the European University Institute in the spring of 2017. I am indebted to Marsha Siefert as well as the journal's editor, Eric G. E. Zuelow, and its two anonymous reviewers for their valuable comments.

In an account in *Der Norden*, the monthly magazine of the *Nordische Gesellschaft* [Nordic Society], a member of Lübeck's branch of the *Hitlerjugend* recounted the enthusiasm engulfing his troop's travels to Denmark and Sweden in the summer of 1939:

An hour before the ship's departure, I really have in my hands the currency which should open the door for our trip to the North. My comrades are already waiting, full of impatience, in front of the shipping company's office and can hardly understand that in the end it all, all works out, even if in the last minute. Then, happily, we embark our Copenhagen-steamer 'Hansa', a Swedish ship from the Halland-Line [shipping company], take leave with all the towers of our Hanseatic city of Lübeck and are immediately immersed in the whole atmosphere which a voyage brings [...].²

Arranged with the help of the *Nordische Gesellschaft*—a Lübeck-based institution acting as a facilitator of economic and cultural exchange between Germany and Northern Europe—the lengthy summer trip took the youngsters first to Copenhagen, where they spent two full days before setting out for Stockholm. Touring the coastal regions north of Copenhagen, the adolescents were 'greatly impressed' as they passed a string of baroque and renaissance palaces on board a bus; not driving too fast to sense 'the great times of German [sic!] history' emanating from the palaces. The accommodation was another highlight, as it had been arranged so that the youngsters would live on the frigate *Jylland*, 'which intervened in the War of Liberation for Schleswig-Holstein'. As it turned out, the article appeared in what would be the final issue of *Der Norden* that was not entirely pre-occupied with the Second World War, demonstrating that until just weeks before war broke out young, ideologically trained Germans travelled northwards as tourists, going sightseeing by bus, the most emblematic of tourist experiences.

They were not alone. Germans of all ages booked close to 200,000 overnight accommodations in Copenhagen alone during the 1930s. Others stayed in the provinces, the popular beaches on the western coast of the Jutland peninsula, for example, arriving by boat on day trips, or sleeping on-board anchored cruise ships—all in relatively large numbers. Yet, this stream of tourists crossing the northern borders of the Third Reich to spend free time in Denmark has not hitherto made its way into historical scholarship.

There may be multiple reasons for this. The First World War, for one thing, was immensely disruptive for tourism and the rise of the National Socialist regime undoubtedly complicated the process of travelling in and out of the German Reich. The comment of one non-academic chronicler of

²'Nach Norden – Hitler Jugend auf Auslandsfahrt zwischen Lübeck, Kopenhagen und Stockholm. Von Rudolf May, Obergefolgschaftsführer, Bann Lübeck [To the North – Hitler Jugend on trip abroad between Lübeck, Copenhagen and Stockholm. By Rudolf May, *Oberfolgschaftsführer*, Lübeck District]', *Der Norden* 16, 9 (September, 1939), 342. This and subsequent translations are mine.

the Tourist Association for Denmark [TAD], the former name of the main association for promoting tourism to and in Denmark, quoted in this article's epigraph, reflects how one retrospective non-academic interpretation linked the impact of these circumstances to tourist relations with Germany after the Nazi takeover.³ Nazi ideology, it is implied, did not condone travelling, least of all to ideologically unsound destinations such as social democratic Denmark.

Danish relations with Germany in the 1930s were intricate indeed. While the Danish Social Democratic Party governed in coalition with the Danish Social Liberal Party from 1928 onwards, German social democrats had been among the first victims of Nazism, and the Danish government's relationship with Germany was an anxious one. Into this nervousness played the question of the Danish-German border—a border that had been redrawn after the Prussian victory in the Second Schleswig War in 1864, and again following the German defeat in the First World War. Although the Nazi leadership never actually demanded a revision of the border until (and even after) the *Wehrmacht* transgressed it in April 1940, quite justified fears of irredentist demands dominated Danish foreign policy throughout the decade.⁴ Yet, as recent research has shown, Danish-German relationships in the 1930s cannot be understood as rigidly based upon political antagonism.⁵ The boundary between the two political systems was not impermeable. Despite their obvious differences, the two societies were in frequent interaction on many levels. This reality is very clear when exploring the history of tourism.

The numbers of German tourists to Denmark increased during the Nazi era, even if they only regained pre-Depression numbers in 1939. Despite social, economic, and political volatility, the 1930s were in many ways also a decade of continued mobility across the national and ideological borders separating social democratic Denmark and National Socialist Germany. For that reason, this article argues that we can only fully understand the developments of interwar tourism, and the experiences of everyday consumption in which they were part, if we take large-scale travelling between different

³ E.g. Hans Joakim Schultz, *Dansk Turisme i 100 år [Danish Tourism through 100 years]* (Aarhus: Danmarks Turistråd, 1988), 51; Another anniversary account of the association gives no mention to the tourist relations to Germany in the 1930s. Knud Secher, *100 år i dansk turisme. Turistårbogen 1989 [100 years in Danish tourism. The Tourist Annual 1989]* (Århus: Samvirkende Danske Turistforeninger, 1989).

⁴ Claus Bundgård Christensen et. al., *Danmark Besat. Krig og Hverdag, 1940-45 [Denmark Occupied. War and Everyday Life, 1940-45]*, 4th ed. (Copenhagen: Informations Forlag, 2015), 46.

⁵ For one recent example, see Palle Roslyng-Jensen, Karl Christian Lammers, and Niklas Olsen. *Nazismen, universiteterne og videnskaben i Danmark [Nazism, the universities and the sciences in Denmark]* (Copenhagen: Museum Tusculanum Press, 2015); For the occupation context, see for example Joachim Lund, 'Denmark and the 'European New Order', 1940-1942', *Contemporary European History* 13 (2004): 3, 305-321; Hans Bonde, 'Sport and politics - Danish-German sport collaboration during World War II', *Scandinavian Journal of History* 35 (2010): 2, 156-176; and Frederik Forrai Ørskov, 'Screening *The Social Face of Denmark* to the Nazis: Social Policy as subdued Resistance during the German Occupation of Denmark,' *Scandinavian Journal of History*, 43 (2018): 2, 187-211.

political systems—whether fascist, communist or democratic⁶—into account as well. Tourism in the interwar years was indeed an arena for competition among these systems; yet, it was more than that as tourists regularly crossed the boundaries between them.

In order to investigate such border-crossings, this article first outlines the international context for the transformation of European tourism and its organisations in the 1930s before situating the influx of German visitors to Denmark into this context, taking it as a case study of trans-ideological tourism. This case study is engaged from four angles. First, paraphrasing quotes reproduced in this article's epigraph, it investigates the German will to travel to Denmark during the decade as well as whether and to which degree the brakes of tourism were in fact slammed on due to political, ideological, and economic considerations. Second, it considers the nature of the institutions, both civic and commercial, that made it possible for German tourists to go to Denmark. Third, it reflects upon the social make-up of the travellers who made or were expected to make their way to Denmark. Finally, the article discusses the ways in which the Danish press as well as state-related institutions portrayed German tourists in both ideological and non-ideological terms, reflecting how ideology and economics were intertwined as actors in the 1930s sought to make sense of an emerging mass consumerist society. Throughout, German tourists are located within in the wider context of international tourism to Denmark during the 1930s.

European Tourism on the Rise

Large-scale tourism came into its own during the inter-war period. To be sure, studies have shown that certain forms of workers' tourism, such as one-day leisure trips, seaside holidays, and proto-package tours to the Great Exhibition of 1851 and the subsequent world's fairs of the second half of the nineteenth century, helped to form the foundations for the emergence of tourism on a mass basis.⁷ Yet, it was the 1930s that finally brought leisure travel to a broader range of workers, just as rationalised means for mass travel and accommodation were also pioneered during the decade.⁸ At the same time, the meanings associated with different modes of travel were reconfigured. For example, the rise of

⁶ This division is a useful yet not unproblematic framework. For example, it does not sufficiently reflect the realities of the authoritarian yet hardly fascist regimes in Central Eastern and South Eastern Europe of the 1930s. Its usefulness, however, lies in the fact that it does indeed demonstrate some of the major political events, movements, and tensions of the period. This is discussed further in the 'In ideological transit' section below.

⁷ For the British case, see Susan Barton, *Working-class organisations and popular tourism, 1840-1970* (Manchester/New York: Manchester University Press, 2005).

⁸ E.g. the 'seaside resort of the 20,000' planned and almost completed by the Nazi regime on the island of Rügen in the Baltic Sea. See Hasso Spode, 'Fordism, Mass Tourism and the Third Reich: The "Strength through Joy" Seaside resort as an Index Fossil', *Journal of Social History*, 38 (2004), 127-155.

automobility and associated infrastructure transformed values attached to bicycle touring, increasingly seen as a cheaper, less comfortable, but also more authentic and adventurous tourist practice.⁹ A range of holiday-oriented institutions such as youth hostel organisations, camping clubs, and worker's travel organisations either emerged or flourished in the last years of the 1920s and the first years of the 1930s in democratically governed countries such as Great Britain, France, and Denmark among others.¹⁰ Many of the authoritarian interwar regimes devoted even more resources to the cause.¹¹ Fascist Italy institutionalised state-organised leisure as early as 1923 and Nazi Germany saw similar development shortly after the power seizure in the early months of 1933. In the Soviet Union, 'proletarian tourism' was organised in earnest from 1930 onwards although in an institutional framework subject to endemic struggles leading to conflicting interpretations of the role of tourism within the communist state.¹²

Far from being fixed to any one ideology, intellectual and political concern with the broader notion of leisure for the masses was shared by right and left alike. The American historian Gary Cross has noted that '[o]ne of the ironies of the 1930s was the democratisation of the summer vacation in Europe,' as paid holiday became an accepted goal on both sides of the political spectrum.¹³ Vacationing was imbued with traditional values related to family, nature, and community, not only making mass leisure attractive to conservatives but assuring that it was appreciated by socialists as well.¹⁴ Furthermore, left and right alike were concerned with the cultural and moral implications of the increased time for leisure obtained by the working class.¹⁵

⁹ Martin Emanuel, 'Seeking adventure and authenticity: Swedish bicycle touring in Europe during the interwar period', *Journal of Tourism History*, 9 (2017), 44-69.

¹⁰ On Britain and France, see Gary Cross, 'Vacations for All: The Leisure Question in the Era of the Popular Front', *Journal for Contemporary History*, 24 (1989): 599-621; No similar treatments exist on the Danish case, but a sense of the development of camping and autotourism in the interwar period is inferable from Michael Frederik Wagner, 'The Rise of Autotourism in Danish Leisure, 1910-1970', *Journal of Tourism History* 5 (2013), 3: 265-286, especially 274-280.

¹¹ Eric G. E. Zuelow, *A History of Modern Tourism* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), e.g. 144.

¹² On Nazi tourism, e.g. Shelley Baranowski, *Strength through Joy: Consumerism and Mass Tourism in the Third Reich* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004); Kristin Semmens, *Seeing Hitler's Germany: Tourism in the Third Reich* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2005); On leisure and the state in Italy, as organised in the *dopolavoro* organisation, see e.g. Victoria de Grazia, *The Culture of Consent: Mass Organization of Leisure in Fascist Italy* (Cambridge, England/New York: Cambridge University Press, 1981); On tourism in the USSR in the 1930s, see among others Diane P. Koenker, *Club Red: Vacation Travel and the Soviet Dream* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2013)

¹³ Cross, 'Vacations for All', quote: 599.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Such free time was an uncommon experience for most workers, and according to politicians and intellectuals its usage promised political impregnation as well as degenerative time-wasting; On the uneasiness of intellectual elites of a range of different ideological persuasions towards the usage of increased free time, see Gary Cross, *Time and Money: The Making of Consumer Culture* (London: Routledge, 1993); Concerns regarding how the worker spent his newly gained holidays were voiced by the social democratic Danish Prime Minister Thorvald Stauning after the legislation on paid holidays had passed in 1938, as he reportedly remarked that 'we should be amiss if we carried through a holiday legislation, only for the workers

Although the movement towards paid holidays, which produced some very tangible legislative results,¹⁶ was a necessary precondition for the emergence of mass travel, it did not automatically make a tourist out of the worker, who could still—and mostly did—spend his or her vacation at home or domestically until after the Second World War.¹⁷ Although the worker-based low-budget mass tourism of the post-war era was within sight in the thirties, the significant growth of tourism in the inter-war period was as much a result of the middle classes increasingly taking advantage of cheaper, expanded, and more comfortable travel infrastructure.¹⁸ That this held true as regards German tourism to Denmark as well will be discussed later in this article.

In Ideological Transit

Such rapid development of tourism institutions and practices can be seen as part of the three-way rivalry of democracy, fascism, and communism that defined the period, as Eric G. E. Zuelow has recently argued.¹⁹ In various configurations, states of all ideological stripes sought to utilise tourism (and leisure more broadly) in their quest for popular support in an ideological field crowded with contenders. To varying degrees, European states realised and sought to harvest tourism's potential for ideological and political ends, especially in terms of health, national (as well as racial and ideological) sentiment and perceived superiority, economic growth, and as a showcase of modernity.²⁰

While this framework is appropriate for understanding the larger ideological, institutional, and political contexts of tourism in the interwar period, this article argues for supplementing it with a bottom-up perspective stressing tourist practices and interactions rather than ideological and political intentions. When seen from this perspective, communism, fascism, and democracy (in its various shapes and forms) are not three easily delineable and self-contained blocks. As for tourism between the

to have no place to go on holiday'. Karin Lützen, 'Sommerferiens Historie [the History of the Summer Vacation]', *Kulturstudier* 2 (2011), 1: 147.

¹⁶ By 1935, 14 countries—most of them European—had instituted legislation granting an annual paid vacation for workers and salaried employees. In June 1936, the Holidays with Pay Convention was adopted by the International Labour Organization, a convention ratified by Denmark in 1939. See ILO's website:

http://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:12100:0::NO::P12100_ILO_CODE:C052 (accessed March 2, 2019); On the Danish state's efforts to secure vacation for its worker's, and its institutionalisation in 1939, see Nan Dahlkild, 'Ferie for folket: Omkring oprettelsen af Dansk Folket [Holiday for the People: On the creation of Danish People's Holiday]', *Arbejderhistorie* 31 (1988): 2-17.

¹⁷ For the French case, see Ellen Furlough, 'Making Mass Vacations: Tourism and Consumer Culture in France. 1930s to 1970s', *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 40 (1998), 2: 247-286.

¹⁸ E.g. Ruth Oldenziel and Mikael Hård, *Consumers, Tinkers, Rebels. The People Who Shaped Europe* (Basingstoke, England/New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 118.

¹⁹ Zuelow, *Modern Tourism*, 134-148; Zuelow builds this understanding of interwar tourism on Mark Mazower, *Dark Continent: Europe's Twentieth Century* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1999), e.g. 'Preface', x.

²⁰ Zuelow, *Modern Tourism*, 135.

wars, tours were not confined to places governed by political regimes committed to the same political ideologies as the tourist's own country.

The governments of democratic, communist, and fascist states alike aimed to keep their citizens from spending money outside their national boundaries through the intensified promotion of domestic travelling. In Nazi Germany for instance, some destinations—such as fascist Italy—ranked atop an ideologically informed hierarchy of preferred tourist itineraries.²¹ Still, as has been well established in the historical literature, political travellers set out to behold those novel political systems whose utopian (and dystopian) promises held enormous sway in the era's political imaginaries. Western visitors to the Soviet Union are the most thoroughly studied of these travellers, but they were far from unique.²² For example, according to Angela Schwarz, tourists made up the largest group of British visitors to Nazi Germany, and while these tourists often travelled to Germany solely for purposes of vacationing, many came to 'the realization that in Hitlerite Germany politics and everyday life could not be separated'.²³ On another level, tourist professionals would occasionally meet at large-scale leisure and travel conferences, a number of which took place in Nazi Germany.²⁴

Moreover, border-crossing tourism could serve as ideological promotion if destinations were carefully selected to highlight the perceived deficiencies of other ideological systems. Thus, cruises organised by the Nazi state's leisure organisation *Kraft durch Freude* [Strength through Joy – KdF] purposefully set sail for and disembarked at destinations where poverty was plainly visible, whereas travellers on board KdF cruises to the Norwegian fjords were not allowed to go ashore in the relatively well-off cities on the Norwegian coast.²⁵ Finally, even if new hindrances—including strict border regimes where visas were hard to obtain, as well as currency restrictions pertaining to the amounts a traveller could carry abroad—occasionally complicated the transit, ordinary tourism between countries with widely differing ideological governing systems did not come to a halt.

²¹ Kristin Semmens, *Seeing Hitler's Germany: Tourism in the Third Reich* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2005), especially 134.

²² There is a large body of works dealing with Western intellectuals visiting the USSR. For one recent example, see Michael David-Fox, *Showcasing the Great Experiment: Cultural Diplomacy and Western Visitors to the Soviet Union, 1921-1941* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012); Surprisingly, travelling to the Soviet Union was not forbidden for Germans at any point throughout the 1930s, even if it was highly discouraged. See Semmens, *Seeing Hitler's Germany*, 137.

²³ Angela Schwarz, 'British Visitors to National Socialist Germany: In a Familiar or in a Foreign Country?' *Journal of Contemporary History* 28 (1993), 3: 487-509, quote: 488.

²⁴ See Kristin Semmens, 'Tourism and Autarky are Conceptually Incompatible', in *Touring Beyond the Nation*, ed. Eric G. E. Zuelow, 195-214 (Farnham, England: Ashgate, 2011).

²⁵ Semmens, *Seeing Hitler's Germany*, 132-133.

Crossing the Reich-Borders: International Tourism out of Nazi Germany

The *Kraft durch Freude* organisation, created shortly after the Nazi power seizure in 1933, was a central provider of opportunities for Germans eager to travel both within and across the border of the Reich, as it quickly established itself as ‘a kind of state-owned travel agency’.²⁶ According to Shelley Baranowski, the KdF sought to mitigate material shortages under the new regime. It did so by stressing a sense of belonging to the workshop and racial community [*Volksgemeinschaft*] as well as the joys of work and national revival, all of which were supposed to provide the German worker with a higher standard of living than in capitalist societies.²⁷ Still, according to Baranowski, these collective values were supplemented—sometimes even replaced—by an adaptation to individual consumer demands.²⁸ This duality can be explained as a result of the body’s position in the National Socialist system: as the National Socialists’ constituency expected a better life in material terms than had been the case in the Weimar Republic, the KdF became a mediator between these expectations on the one hand and the need for current sacrifices for the sake of future abundance in the ‘living space’ envisioned by Nazi ideology on the other.²⁹

Even though Kristin Semmens has convincingly argued that tourism served the Nazi regime as a ‘façade of normalcy’ as well as a showcase for the achievements of National Socialism both at home and abroad,³⁰ large-scale worker tourism was ultimately more aspiration than reality under Hitler. This was especially so with regard to travels abroad. Baranowski asserts that workers were relatively underrepresented on *KdF* trips (unskilled workers even more so) and salaried employees relatively overrepresented.³¹ On a similar note, Semmens reminds us that tourism outside the realms of the *KdF* remained a privilege for the wealthy, and was limited by restrictions imposed by the regime on currencies that could be taken out of the country, often in accordance with the ideological priorities of the Nazi state.³²

Such restrictions, which had existed at the end of the Weimar Republic as well, significantly affected tourism to Denmark. Danish tourism officials more than once lamented the ‘conditions in Germany’, which thwarted the influx of travellers from what was traditionally the second largest source

²⁶ Spode, ‘Fordism, Mass Tourism and the Third Reich’, 132.

²⁷ Baranowski, *Strength through Joy*, 4-6.

²⁸ Baranowski, *Strength through Joy*.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Kristin Semmens, ‘A Holiday from the Nazis?’ In *Life and Times in Nazi Germany*, ed. Lisa Pine, 131-159 (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2016), quote: 153.

³¹ Baranowski, *Strength through Joy*, 66-69.

³² Semmens, *Seeing Hitler’s Germany*, 135.

(after Sweden) of foreign tourists and, it was sometimes argued, made promotional efforts in that direction fruitless.³³ They were not alone with their complaints. As Semmens has shown, large international tourist conferences in Nazi Germany in the latter half of the decade often revolved around questions such as the effects of currency restrictions on border-crossing tourism. At these conferences, the international guests repeatedly sought to exert pressure on the German state to alleviate or eliminate such restrictions.³⁴ Still, elsewhere Semmens makes it clear that Germans actually travelled abroad more often after 1933 than had been the case before, as travelling internationally was not forbidden by but rather served the long-term goals of the Nazi regime.³⁵

Taken as a whole, tourism out of the Third Reich followed the patterns of Nazi consumption and mass tourism in general: although altered organisationally, travels abroad functioned as commodities in what S. Jonathan Wiesen has termed the 'Nazi marketplace'. Although the coming of National Socialist dictatorship transformed the patterns of consumption in Germany, it did not spell the end of consumer demands. While acknowledging that companies and consumers in Nazi Germany were expected to produce and consume in ways consistent with 'the needs of the state and the racial community', Wiesen shows that the Nazi government neither could nor wished to abolish a rationalised market-based consumer society; the regime's legitimacy was tied too tightly to its ability to generate material prosperity for the sorely tried German population. From these discordant foundations arose the Nazi marketplace: a market economy operating largely according to the rules of its bourgeois predecessor but imbued with ideological meaning in order to 'serve the aim of engineering a materially abundant, racially pure society'. This market was exclusionary based on ethnicity rather than prosperity.³⁶

While refashioned so as to ostensibly meet ideological goals, the availability of border-crossing tourism throughout the 1930s nonetheless testifies to the regime's acknowledgment of the purpose such opportunities served in building legitimacy; they satisfied a perceived need to travel grounded in the desires of the modern consumer, especially those from the middle class.³⁷ Regardless of any ideological concerns the Nazis may have had about allowing tourism out of the country, the regime adopted a

³³ E.g. Unknown Author, 'Dansk Turistpropaganda i Udlandet [Danish Tourist Propaganda Abroad]', *Turisten [The Tourist]* 8 (1933), 12: 2.

³⁴ Semmens, 'Tourism and Autarky'.

³⁵ Semmens, *Seeing Hitler's Germany*, 135-139.

³⁶ S. Jonathan Wiesen, *Creating the Nazi Marketplace: Commerce and Consumption in the Third Reich* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011), quote: 5.

³⁷ Semmens, *Seeing Hitler's Germany*, 135-139.

pragmatic approach in which political and economic concerns took primacy. The next section explores how these dynamics played out when Denmark was the potential destination.

Vacationing in the North: German Tourists in Denmark

The numbers of German tourists visiting Denmark reveals a complicated story. Although the statistical sources are rather inconsistent in their methodology and frequency, Table 1 nonetheless gives an impression of the quantities of German visitors throughout the decade. It is noteworthy that the numbers dropped in 1931, well before the Nazis came to power, and followed the general increasing trend in foreign visitors to Denmark from 1932 to 1934 when the absolute number of tourists surpassed the 1930 figures. Only then did the numbers decrease, albeit seeing a small recovery in 1936 before bottoming out in relative terms in 1937. The numbers from June 1938 to May 1939 show a significant recovery in both absolute and relative terms until the tensions leading to the outbreak of war in September 1939 virtually terminated international tourism to Denmark.³⁸

The picture that emerges is far from transparent, and reflects practical political and economic concerns rather than mobility patterns motivated or restricted by ideology. In 1931, the Weimar government imposed a 100 RM tariff on all who travelled outside German borders,³⁹ which along with

³⁸ That the war made international tourism to Denmark come to a halt was a narrative continuously repeated in numerous contemporary accounts. The TAD Chairman's report for 1939, for example, reported on higher numbers of foreign visitors than in 1938 for June and July of 1939 but significantly lower numbers in August compared to the year before. 'Beretning om arbejdet i sæsonen 1939, aflagt af Formanden: Direktør Chr. H. Olesen [Report on the work of the 1939 season, given by the Chairman: Manager Chr. H. Olesen]', in 441, 07798, Årsberetninger 1924-1965, TD-RA. In its annual report from 1942, *Dansk Folkeferie [Danish People's Holidays]*, a semi-official travel agency created to provide leisure activities to workers after the passage of legislation on mandatory holidays in 1938, described the situation of the preceding year rather gloomily: 'A year which has seen the total interruption of all peaceful travelling between the countries—only bombers and diplomats currently travel across the national borders [—...] has passed into history'. See 'Beretning: Folke-Ferie's Virksomhed fra 1. Januar til 31. December 1942 [Report: People's Holidays' Work from January 1st to December 31st 1942]', 1, in Box 452, Beretninger [Reports], Folke-Ferie 1935-1963 [People's Holidays 1935-1963], Landsorganisationen i Danmarks arkiv [The Archive of the Danish Confederation of Trade Unions], Arbejderbevægelsens Bibliotek og Arkiv [The Danish Labor Movement's Archives and Library]. How abrupt travelling was cut off is, however, a subject for further study, just as it is indeed possible that German military personnel behaved in similar touristic ways in occupied Denmark as they did in France according to Bertram M. Gordon's recent study. See Bertram M. Gordon, *War Tourism: Second World War France from Defeat and Occupation to the Creation of Heritage* (Ithaca/London: Cornell University Press, 2018); Indeed, in the autumn 1940 some tourist officials toyed with the idea of distributing German tourist brochures to the occupying forces through the industrially minded Danish-German association, although only excess stock from the pre-war years. '5. møde i forretningsudvalget [5. Meeting in the Executive Committee]', November 4th 1940, 12, 421, 07798, 1940-1941, Forhandlingsprotokol 1923-1967, TD-RA; Moreover, the leader of the TAD participated in a meeting in Berlin organized by the *Nordische Gesellschaft* in the summer of 1941, in order to 'keep old connections alive' and to make sure the organization would 'be ready to initiate the German propaganda work, as soon as conditions allowed for it'. '4. møde i forretningsudvalget [4. Meeting in the Executive Committee]', June 16th 1941, 7-8, 421, 07798, 1940-1941, Forhandlingsprotokol 1923-1967, TD-RA.

³⁹ Semmens, *Seeing Hitler's Germany*, 133.

the deepening economic crisis might account for the steep pre-Hitler drop in leisure travel. As the restrictions were alleviated by 1932, Germans were the sole group of foreign visitors whose visits became more frequent as the economic depression intensified internationally.⁴⁰ Contemporary tourist officials certainly understood the drop of visitors in 1935 in terms of currency restrictions imposed by the Third Reich.⁴¹ However, it is unclear why such restrictions did not markedly affect the numbers in 1933 and 1934, when at least some restrictions were in effect, although they might have been less severe.⁴² It is more certain that the temporary dip in 1937 coincided with the failure to obtain an agreement with Germany on the terms for tourist travel for that year.⁴³ Regardless, Germany remained a very significant source of tourists travelling to Denmark: throughout the period, only Swedes visited Denmark more frequently, even in 1937, when the share of German tourists was at its relative low point.⁴⁴

Moreover, as shown in Table 2, a large number of German tourists—not included in Table 1—visited Copenhagen on board ‘excursion ships’ throughout the Nazi era. These ships, which typically set out from Northern Germany and whose numbers increased significantly from 1933 onwards, facilitated day-trips or (to a lesser extent) trips spanning one or two nights.⁴⁵ As part of the day-trips,

⁴⁰ ‘Årsberetning 1934 [Annual Report 1934]’, 4, in 441, 07798, Årsberetninger 1924-1965, TD-RA.

⁴¹ ‘Aarsmødet 1935. Formandens Beretning. [Annual Meeting. Report of the Chairman]’, 4, in 441 Årsberetninger 1924-1965, no. 07798, TD-RA.

⁴² At a meeting of the Executive Committee of TAD on April 29, 1933, the restrictions on German ‘travel money’, and how to alleviate them, were discussed. In Italy, it was noted, the German tourist could carry 700 RM, to Denmark only 200 RM, although pre-paid hotels could be excluded from the limit. See: Editorial. ‘Turistforeningen for Danmark holder Aarsmøde i Aalborg den 18. Juni [TAD’s Annual Meeting in Aalborg on June 18th]’, *Turisten [The Tourist]* 8 (1933), 5: 71; This is instructive as to the place of Denmark in the hierarchy of destinations in the Nazi regimes view on border-crossing tourism, in which Italy was highest and the USSR was rock-bottom. See: Semmens, *Seeing Hitler’s Germany*, 135-137. For examples on how some actors, such as the *Nordische Gesellschaft*, explicitly engaged and sought to overcome such hierarchies, see Frederik Forrai Ørskov, ‘From Nordic Romanticism to Nordic Modernity: Danish Tourist Brochures in Nazi Germany, 1929–39’, *Journal of Contemporary History*, ePub ahead of print (2019) <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022009418815319>.

⁴³ ‘Beretning fra Formanden for Turistraadet paa Turistraadets møde den 26. September 1938 [The Chairman’s Report at the meeting of the Tourist Council on September 26, 1938]’, 5-6, in 441, 07798, Årsberetninger 1924-1965, TD-RA.

⁴⁴ See ‘Beretning om Foreningens Virksomhed i 1937 [Report on the Work of the Organisation in 1937]’, 441, 07798, Årsberetninger 1924-1965, TD-RA.

⁴⁵ In 1934 approximately 2/3 of the passengers were day-trippers. Unknown Author, ‘Antal Passagerer med Turist-Skibe i 1934 [Numbers of Passengers on Tourist Ships in 1934]’. 90-31 Dan (10/5), Diverse, Udenrigsministeriet: Gruppeordnede sager (1909-1945), Rigsarkivet [UMGS]; Some of the statistics in the source material mark a clear distinction between so-called ‘excursion ships’ and regular ‘tourist ships’ but what the distinction consists of is less clear. Presumably, the ‘excursion ships’ had Copenhagen as the main destination, whereas the ‘tourist ships’ were cruises for which Copenhagen was one stop among many. The number given here, then, most likely understates the numbers of German ship tourists to Denmark in the period.

passengers would typically disembark and spend 6-8 hours in Copenhagen.⁴⁶ ‘Excursion ships’ would visit provincial cities as well, but the numbers were not consistently reported. It might give an indication of the quantities that 13 ships with 6200 passengers anchored in provincial harbours in 1936, generally not a strong year in terms of German tourism to Denmark.⁴⁷

Looking through what remains of *KdF*-related archival material, its own literature and annual accounts, as well as secondary literature on the organisation’s fleet,⁴⁸ it is evident that the ‘excursion ships’ going to Copenhagen were not part of *KdF*’s cruise program, to which recent scholarship has devoted a great deal of attention. These *Hochseefahrten*, often week-long cruises to destinations such as Madeira, Greece, and Norway,⁴⁹ were certainly important, as they came to be considered the epitome of worker tourism under Nazism, and since more than 700,000 tickets were sold for cruises abroad between the Nazi takeover and the outbreak of war.⁵⁰ However, as Semmens has recently noted, scholars have paid less attention to ‘the innumerable short excursions and weekend trips taken in the Third Reich, surely still to be considered a form of tourism’; even less attention, one might add, is accorded to day-trips beyond the *Reichsgrenze*. Such day tripping, Semmens argues, became part of the ostensible normalcy of everyday life in Nazi Germany.⁵¹ Outside the realms of *KdF*—and even if the network of official tourist organisations was thoroughly Nazified and the work of travel agents heavily supervised by the state—commercial tourism still catered to ‘[a] substantial number of middle class customers’.⁵² The one-day trips to Copenhagen complement this picture, implying that everyday life in Nazi Germany also consisted of a plethora of leisure activities on offer for the middle classes.

Apart from the fact that participation was lower during the first years of the Nazi regime and

⁴⁶ Udenrigsministeriets Udvalg for Turistpropaganda i Udlandet [from The Foreign Ministry’s Committee on Tourist Propaganda Abroad], *Danmarks turistpropaganda [The Tourist Propaganda of Denmark]* (Copenhagen: Dyva & Jeppensens Bogtrykkeri, 1935), 16-18.

⁴⁷ ‘Beretning fra Formanden for Turistraadet paa Turistraadets møde den 26. September 1938’.

⁴⁸ In the hope of finding traces of *KdF*-tourism to Denmark I looked through not just the literature already cited here but also relevant archival material at the *Berlin-Lichterfelde Bundesarchiv*, as well as the organisation’s own literature on their ships, trips, and leisure programs, mostly found at the library of the *Berlin-Lichterfelde Archiv*.

⁴⁹ Travelling to the fjords of Norway, the passengers on the *KdF*-ships stayed aboard. According to recent accounts the German regime did not want the conditions of National Socialism to be part in an unfavourable comparison, or alternatively feared that the German tourist might encounter criticism of the regime from democratically minded Norwegians. It is therefore significant, that the passengers on board the ‘excursion ships’ to Copenhagen were allowed to disembark. See Semmens, *Seeing Hitler’s Germany*, 132; Claudia Schallenberg, ‘Kreuzfahrt unterm Hakenkreuz. Die KdF-Seereisen nach Norwegen [Cruises under the Swastika. The KdF Voyages to Norway]’, in *Nordlandreise. Die Geschichte einer touristischen Entdeckung*, eds. Sonja Kinzler and Doris Tillmann, 188-197 (Hamburg: Mare, 2010), 195.

⁵⁰ Spode, ‘Fordism, Mass Tourism and the Third Reich’: 133.

⁵¹ Semmens, ‘A Holiday from the Nazis?’, 132; elsewhere Semmens has shown that the Nazi regime ultimately allowed excursions across the border to Alsace, France and Switzerland offered by commercial travel agencies in the Black Forest region in South-Western Germany. Semmens, *Seeing Hitler’s Germany*, 82.

⁵² Semmens, ‘A Holiday from the Nazis?’, 134-137.

that the numbers given for boat visitors were greatly affected by the outbreak of war in 1939, the quantity of passengers follows a somewhat comparable pattern to that of hotel guests as outlined above, suggesting that similar mechanisms informed developments. The statistics outlined in both tables caution against a teleological understanding of tourism out of Germany. Although international travels were subject to hierarchies stemming from ideological concerns, they were even more subject to economic policies such as the tourist agreements made between the two governments, which enabled German tourists to go to Denmark and committed the Danish state to the import of extra goods from Germany.⁵³

The Danish press eagerly reported on the negotiations over and effects of these ‘tourist agreements’. For example, when an agreement was signed in late June 1935, allowing German tourists to convert up to 500 RM to Danish currency, one provincial newspaper ran a headline stating that ‘The tourist agreement with Germany proves to work excellently’. The article highlighted economic considerations as the main impetus for Germans seeking out Denmark as a travel destination, while expressing concerns as to the Danish tourist industry’s capability to accommodate the upcoming ‘German invasion’.⁵⁴ The problem was not one of too few tourists but too many. In fact, only a week later, as recounted in this article’s epigraph, another newspaper would report on the temporary suspension of the tourist agreement due to the fact that the ‘tremendous will to travel’ to Denmark on the part of Germans had made it impossible for Denmark to keep its trade-related part of the deal.⁵⁵ Thus, it would seem that ‘the iron fist of Nazism’ quelled neither wanderlust nor desire for leisure among the German people; Denmark, as a next-door neighbour, constituted a convenient destination for travelling Germans during Nazism as well.

Facilitators of Travel across Ideological Boundaries

The trips, at sea and on land, were arranged through commercial travel organisations and civic groups. The commercial bodies constituted a patchwork of different actors, who, according to Semmens, catered to the large group of middle-class Germans who continued to prefer individual travel to *KdF*-

⁵³ A duplicate of the initial proposal of the German government for the 1935 agreement can be found in the archive of the Foreign Ministry: 90-32 Dan (10/5), Diverse, UMGS.

⁵⁴ Unknown Author, ‘Turistordningen med Tyskland viser sig at virke glimrende [The tourist agreement with Germany proves to work excellently]’, *Fyens Stiftstidende*, June 30, 1935.

⁵⁵ Unknown Author, ‘Tyske Turister [German tourists]’, *Aftenbladet*, July 6, 1935; In its July issue of the same year, the organ of the Danish Tourist Association, *Turisten* [*The Tourist*] gave a similar report. It recounted how the association worked hard to find accommodation for the many German tourists who sought out the Danish beaches at a faster rate than what could be compensated for through the purchase of German goods. Unknown Author, ‘Tyskerne fik penge, men -! [The Germans got money, but -!]', *Turisten* 10 (1935), 7: 2.

style group holidays.⁵⁶ *Norden*, the travel agency of the Danish State Railways, played an important role in this regard, leading the promotional efforts from their quarters at *Unter den Linden* in Berlin.⁵⁷ Their advertisements would typically highlight Denmark and Copenhagen on the one hand, and the means for getting there on the other, stressing comfortable train travel, and, from the mid-thirties onwards, the excitement of crossing a number of grand and newly constructed bridges on the way.⁵⁸ International agencies were active as well. For instance, the *American Express Company*, operating from the same boulevard as *Norden*, advertised weekend trips to Copenhagen during the summer of 1934.⁵⁹

Other tourists embraced group travel, but in different institutional settings. In June 1937, for example, 2200 German tourists on board a ship chartered by the *Hamburger Tageblatt* spent the day in Copenhagen, a seemingly quite common model if judged by contemporary press accounts.⁶⁰ From Lübeck in Northern Germany, the *Nordische Gesellschaft* [Nordic Society] arranged tours across the Baltic Sea. The Society launched its activities in 1921 hoping to act as a facilitator of economic and cultural exchange between the Nordic countries (initially in a very broad sense, even including Soviet Russia) and Germany, although until 1933 primarily catering to the local and regional interests of Lübeck and its surrounding area. Its activities were wide-ranging and included promoting major cultural festivities, such as a *Nordische Woche* [Nordic Week] and, after 1933, a yearly annual congress: all extensively covered in the German press.⁶¹

After the Nazi seizure of power, the *Nordische Gesellschaft* was Nazified, its leadership put in the hands of Alfred Rosenberg and its attitude to Scandinavia increasingly guided by the tenets of Nordic race theory.⁶² As one critical correspondent for the Danish broadsheet paper *Politiken* noted upon witnessing the 1935 festival, the Society had turned into a matter of politics and worldviews. It would seem, according to the correspondent, that the *Nordische Gesellschaft* was now working towards

⁵⁶ Seemans, *Seeing Hitler's Germany*, 98-128.

⁵⁷ E.g. Schultz, *Dansk turisme*, 31.

⁵⁸ See, for example, advertisement in the *Nordische Gesellschaft's* monthly: *Der Norden* 15 (1938), 7: 244.

⁵⁹ 'Årsberetning 1934', 10.

⁶⁰ Unknown Author, '2200 Femkrone-Turister i København i Gaar [2200 Five-Kroner Tourists in Copenhagen Yesterday]', *Nationaltidende*, June 25, 1937.

⁶¹ Thus, a great many press clippings are found in Allgemeines (Zeitungsausschnitte) Band 1 (Akte d. Weltwirtschaft Instituts Kiel) 1921-1937, *Nordische Gesellschaft*: 1, Archiv der Hansestadt Lübeck. Vereins- und Verbandsarchive [AL-VV].

⁶² On Nordic race theory, see Christopher M. Hutton, *Race and the Third Reich* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2005); and Christopher M. Hutton, 'Racial ideology as elite discourse: Nordicism and the visual in an age of mass culture', *Social Semiotics* 27 (2017): 3, 355-347; On the interplay between Nordic race theory, the *Nordische Gesellschaft*, and Danish tourist promotion see Ørskov, 'From Nordic Romanticism to Nordic Modernity'.

Nazifying the north and would only be truly satisfied ‘when the Nordic countries acknowledge unequivocally that the Nazi spirit is the Nordic spirit’.⁶³

The Society operated a tourist agency, the *Nordische Verkehrs G.M.B.H. Lübeck*, as part of its organisation. In the 1920s and early 1930s, its offers included trips to the Soviet Union alongside group tours to Scandinavia aimed specifically at academics and students.⁶⁴ In line with Erika L. Briesacher’s observation about tours arranged by the Society for Nordic tourists visiting Lübeck, the trips were examples of ‘cultural tourism, highlighting art, architecture, and history [...]’.⁶⁵

The northern tours continued after 1933. The extent of *Nordische Gesellschaft*’s travel activity is difficult to ascertain since the Society’s archival documents burned during the allied bombing of Lübeck in 1942. Yet, according to a note in *Hamburger Fremdenblatt*, the *Nordische Verkehrs G.M.B.H* arranged 38 school trips bringing more than 45,000 school children ‘over the sea’ in 1937 as well as 18,000 passengers on 27 trips. ‘The destination of many trips’, it is noted, ‘was Copenhagen, but smaller Danish cities were visited as well’. The popularity of the tours were beyond doubt, as ‘each and every spot was sold for the Society’s weekend trips’.⁶⁶ The numbers, when compared to those of day-trippers outlined in Table 2, are quite significant; thus it is unsurprising that the ‘cheap group travels’ arranged by the *Nordische Gesellschaft* were mentioned as part of the Danish tourist landscape in the 1935 final report of a Committee on Tourist Propaganda Abroad [CTPA] commissioned by the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs.⁶⁷

‘The little German Tourist’ and other Travellers

The CTPA was commissioned in 1934 to reform TAD in an effort to professionalise its promotional efforts abroad. The action was also a response to increasing concern about the inadequacy of the existing volunteer-based, and decentralised organisation’s ability to reach potential visitors abroad.⁶⁸

⁶³ Th. Steinthal in *Politiken*, June 28, 1935.

⁶⁴ Nordische Verkehrs G. M. B. H., *Sonderreise der Nordischen Gesellschaft nach Findland, Sovjet-Russland, Letland veranstaltet von der Nordischen Verkehrs G.m.B.H.*, and Nordische Verkehrs G. M. B. H., *Gruppenreisen nach Skandinavien*, in Nordische Verkehrs G. M. B. H. Reiseprogramme (Akte d. Weltwirtschaftsinstitutets Kiel), 1928, 4, Nordische Gesellschaft, AL-VV; Unknown Author, ‘Nordlandsreise für deutsche Studenten’, *Kieler Zeitung* June 19, 1925 in Allgemeines (Zeitungsausschnitte) Band 1 (Akte d. Weltwirtschaft Instituts Kiel) 1921-1937, Nordische Gesellschaft: 1, AL-VV.

⁶⁵ Erika L. Briesacher, *Cultural Currency: Notgeld, Nordische Woche, and the Nordische Gesellschaft, 1921-1945* (Ph.D. dissertation, Kent State University, 2012), 172-73.

⁶⁶ Unknown author, ‘Der Zug nach dem Norden,’ *Hamburger Fremdenblatt*, October 29, 1937 in Allgemeines (Zeitungsausschnitte) Band 1 (Akte d. Weltwirtschaft Instituts Kiel) 1921-1937, Nordische Gesellschaft: 1, AL-VV.

⁶⁷ CTPA, *Danmarks turistpropaganda*, 43.

⁶⁸ Made up by commercial agents, voluntary associations torn between local interests and centralizing impulses, and various cautious state-funded contributions, the institutions of Danish tourism—besides TAD also the Danish State Railways [DSB]

As TAD's chairman noted in a speech given at the body's last general assembly before implementation of reform efforts in 1935, the old organisation's 'structure did not fit the demands of the age, and undoubtedly hindered multiple new opportunities for development'.⁶⁹ The committee, in turn, took a broad approach to what contemporaries perceived as rapid change in the tourism industry and its potential impact on the national economy. This perspective undoubtedly owed much to the dominance of representatives from the commercial sector as well as civil servants from the Foreign Ministry who held key positions in the CTPA and its sub-committees.⁷⁰ Moreover, modernised transportation and evolving advertising strategies occasioned the committee's desire to learn more about potential visitors and their leisure interests. This section investigates these discussions, as they help clarify the mostly economic goals underpinning the attitudes to the tourist interactions among Danish tourist officials and civil servants.

Mass tourism, as envisioned by the CTPA, was premised on increased middle-class affluence. While the tourist potential in new leisure opportunities for workers was acknowledged, they were seen largely as future developments. At the committee's initial meeting, for example, the chairman of the Association for Hotels and Restaurants argued for the extension of school holidays as a means for prolonging the tourist season. He claimed that 'forced worker holidays' had not led to the expected increase of (presumably foreign) tourists; as a result, seaside resorts stood more or less empty and were forced to end the season when school holidays concluded in mid-August.⁷¹ The extensive archival traces of the reorganisation effort do not give the impression that the 'plainer [foreign] tourists' envisioned by the committee, as evinced in its final report, belonged to the working class. For example, in a statement by the President of the silver and porcelain company Georg Jensen, the tourist—as seen through the eyes of the manufacturer—is, unsurprisingly, someone capable of and interested in

and other private, semi-private or public actors such as the shipping company DFDS, private railroad companies, travel agencies, commercial associations as well as municipal governments and institutions, to name but a few—constituted a hodgepodge in which concerted action pertaining to tourist infrastructure and promotion—although occasionally carried out—was more often than not out of reach. For a lengthy description of the work of this committee and the making of the report, see Ørskov, 'The Tourist Association for Denmark and Its Promotional Efforts in Nazi Germany', chapters 2 and 3; see also Mikael Frausing, 'Et Lykkeligt Fornuftsægteskab? Turistforening for Danmark mellem hjemstavnsturisme og eksportturisme ca. 1888-1967 [A Happy Marriage of Convenience? The Danish National Tourist Organization c. 1888-1967]', *Kulturstudier* 1 (2010): 25-52.

⁶⁹ 'Formandens beretning. Tiden fra 1/1 1935 – 1/5 1935 [The Chairman's Report. The time from January 1st 1935 to May 1st 1935]', 4. 441, 07798, Årsberetninger 1924-1965, Turistforeningen for Danmark.

⁷⁰ *Danmarks turistpropaganda*, 5-7; Also Ørskov, 'The Tourist Association for Denmark and Its Promotional Efforts in Nazi Germany', 60-63.

⁷¹ '1st meeting', 8, in *Mødereferater fra Udenrigsministeriets Udvalg for Turistpropaganda i Udlandet [Minutes from CTPA]*, 90 Dan. (10-5a) Møderef., 90-27, UMGS.

spending time (and money) at the upper-level shops which dominated the central shopping street *Strøget*. Many a tourist had told the President that ‘they had gone to Denmark to see the country from which the beautiful porcelain and silver originated [... even if] they had often added “and to see Thorvaldsen’s museum” ’.⁷²

Tourism stemming from interest in the political and social organisation of Danish society also played a significant role in discussions. In advertisement sub-committee meetings, for instance, study trips to farms, dairies, and social institutions were among the attractions emphasised outside of Copenhagen.⁷³ In fact, the social profile of Danish society came to be an important selling point in TAD promotional efforts towards the end of the 1930s.⁷⁴ Although visitors appreciating cheap prices and comfortable accommodation were seen as the way of the future, especially in a country short of spectacular tourist sights, working class travellers were not regarded as the bedrock of border-crossing tourism. While the re-organisation of TAD ultimately laid the foundations of a tourist industry, this did not materialise in earnest until well into the post-war period.

For geographical reasons, Germany and Sweden were the most obvious markets for a foreign tourist audience. As we have seen, they did indeed make up the two largest groups of visitors, and the day-trippers arriving from these two countries took on something akin to mass proportions during the 1930s. Oddly, development efforts did not always reflect this. Thus, in September 1934, when the Danish envoy to London sent a memorandum to A. J. Poulsen, the head of the Foreign Ministry’s Press Department, about how to attract ‘[t]he black coated army’ (the staff of larger British businesses), he noted ‘how much “the little German tourist” had previously meant to Denmark’.⁷⁵ Yet, the CTPA directed little attention to attracting German tourists of any kind. Instead, an entire section of *Danmarks Turistpropaganda [Denmark’s Tourist Propaganda]*, the report ultimately generated by the CTPA, reflected on how best to engage in tourist promotion in overseas countries and the US in particular.⁷⁶ As presented in the report, this choice reflected the sparseness of pre-existing experience with promotional efforts in these areas when compared to those undertaken in Nordic and Western European countries.⁷⁷

⁷² ‘2nd meeting, appendix’, 1, in *Mødereferater fra Udenrigsministeriets Udvalg*.

⁷³ Minutes from ‘3. Møde i reklameudvalget [Third meeting in the Advertisement sub-committee],’ July 4, 1934, 90-34, UMGS.

⁷⁴ Ørskov, ‘From Nordic Romanticism to Nordic Modernity’.

⁷⁵ Correspondence between the Royal Danish Embassy in London and The Danish Foreign Ministry, September 3, 1934, 90-31, UMGS.

⁷⁶ CTPA, *Danmarks Turistpropaganda*, 102-119, 104-117 deals with the potential for promotional efforts in the US.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 102.

Other factors likely played a role as well. TAD's annual report from 1934 recounts a correspondence with the association's representative in New York. Here, the representative asked for large quantities of promotional material, as he predicted that 'the political conditions in Germany etc. gave Scandinavia and hence Denmark [better] chances for securing a significant proportion of the stream of tourists, which would leave America for Europe the forthcoming summer [of 1934]'.⁷⁸ In an interview given in the spring of 1935, a Conservative MP and member of the CTPA, suggested another attraction to Anglophone visitors: Denmark was not a Nazi country.⁷⁹ Furthermore, the MP argued, German restrictions on currency convertibility made a shift of attention to a British audience necessary.⁸⁰ That only scant consideration was given to Germany as a target for tourist advertising, then, was mostly due to the restrictions imposed by the German state, the alleviation of which the committee members did not expect in the foreseeable future. Commenting on the promotional budget, for example, one member of the advertisement sub-committee remarked that 'given the conditions, one must question [the amount devoted to] Germany'.⁸¹

Still, in the final budget suggested for the soon-to-be-established Foreign Department of TAD's promotion efforts abroad, Germany and England came out on top with 41,690 DKK devoted to each country.⁸² In fact, a newspaper based in the Danish-German borderlands put forward the argument that the 50 RM currency restrictions would lead to an increase in the number of visitors from Germany, as Denmark's proximity to Germany and its cheap prices made it the only country a German tourist could visit for a few days with that amount of money available.⁸³

⁷⁸ 'Årsberetning 1934', 4; The wish was granted: 10,000 folders were sent to New York.

⁷⁹ Unknown Author, 'H.F. Ulrichsen siger noget om H.C. Andersen, det kolde Bord og Spøttrup på Turistplakaten [H.F. Ulrichsen says something about H.C. Andersen, the cold table and Spøttrup on the Tourist Poster]', *Berlingske Politiske og Avertissementstidende*, March 23, 1935.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ Proposed corrections to the account of the advertisement sub-committee, undated, 90-34, UMGS; In the same vein, the temporary Executive Board of TAD immediately after the organisation's reorganisation in 1935 did not recommend making new German-language material, but instead recommended that the Foreign Ministry negotiated a tourist agreement with Germany. 'Aarsmødet 1935. Formandens Beretning', 2; Similarly, in a correspondence between the Danish Consul in Berlin and the Foreign Ministry's Press Office, the currency restrictions were an argument given by the Consul to decline a request made by the *Berliner Tageblatt* on Danish willingness to advertise in the Newspaper. See 'Dansk Turistpropaganda i Tyskland. ('Berliner Tageblatt') [Danish Tourist Propaganda in Germany ('Berliner Tageblatt')]', 90 Dan. (10/5) Diverse, 90-33, UMGS.

⁸² CTPA; *Danmarks Turistpropaganda*, appendix inserted between pages 98 and 99.

⁸³ Unknown Author, 'Mægtigt Fremmedbesøg i Danmark i Sommer [Tremendous Foreign Visit in Denmark this Summer]', *Hejmdal*, May 3, 1934.

The German Tourist in the Danish Imagination

Because of their limited economic means, German tourists to Denmark often appeared in a rather unflattering way in the Danish press. To be sure, the German tourists were occasionally portrayed in particularly ideological terms. This was especially the case for the communist party's newspaper as it variously described the tourists as 'Nazi thugs', as demonstrators being shipped in, as spies, and as anti-Jewish propagandists.⁸⁴ Moreover, on a few occasions, but almost exclusively in the first couple of years following the *Machtergreifung*, more widely reported news stories noted and often condemned anti-Semitic episodes involving German tourists.⁸⁵

Negative portrayals typically revolved around the economic conditions under which Germans travelled. As one newspaper reported on the successful negotiation of a 'tourist agreement' in June 1935 (along with a celebratory satirical poem written for the occasion, quoted in this article's epigraph), the alleviation of the currency restrictions were not particularly helpful. After all, 'the fact that they had continuously been allowed to [travel] had fewer practical implications as long as they could only carry 10 [Reichs] Marks with them—an amount that even the most frugal wanderer [*vandrefugl*: corresponding to the German *Wandervogel*] would find too modest'.⁸⁶ In the midst of the 1937 tourist season, a conservative daily newspaper described the visit of '2200 Five-Kroner Tourists in Copenhagen' in a satirical account. Having only five *Reichsmark* available—half of the usual amount under the current restrictions, since the tourists' itinerary had already taken them to Oslo—the tourists nevertheless saw Copenhagen 'as thoroughly as only Germans see foreign places'. Walking around the city, according to the article,

they photographed *Børsen* [the Stock Exchange], walked around Christiansborg [the Parliament] and ascended the Town Hall Tower. Everywhere they first asked: How much is it? When it was free, they entered without hesitation. If the entry prize exceeded 10 øre [a hundredth of a Krone], a counsel had to be held before anything was settled.

⁸⁴ E.g. Unknown Author, 'Tyske Turister driver Anti-Jødisk Propaganda i København [German Tourists are engaging in Anti-Jewish Propaganda in Copenhagen]', *Arbejderbladet*, July 30, 1936; Unknown Author, 'Tyske Nazister marcherer gennem den indre By [German Nazis are marching through the inner City]', *Arbejderbladet*, June 22, 1937; Unknown Author, 'Tyske Turister beordres til at spionere i Danmark [German Tourists are ordered to spy in Denmark]', *Arbejderbladet*, July 20, 1937.

⁸⁵ Unknown Author, 'De fine Nazi-Næser [The delicate Nazi Noses]', *Fyns Social-Demokrat*, July 23, 1934; Unknown Author, 'Tyske Turister fornærmer Jøder i København [German Tourists insult Jews in Copenhagen]', *Dagens Nyheder*, July 8, 1933; Unknown Author, 'En Gæstgiver eller Hotelejer kan ikke afvise nogen [An Innkeeper or Hotel Owner cannot refuse anyone]', *Bornholms Social-Demokrat*, August 1, 1934; Unknown Author, 'Uhørt [Unheard of]', *Østsjællands Folkeblad*, July 7, 1933; More atypically, a conservative daily scorned anti-Nazi protesters for showing, in the summer of 1938, 'their hatefulness and resentment towards the children's German fatherland' as a group of German schoolchildren visited Copenhagen, a city 'which is widely renowned for its hospitality and which should show, not least towards children from a foreign country, its most smiling and happy face'. Hamar [pseudonym], 'Tyske Skolebørn paa Sommervisit', *Nationaltidende*, June 3, 1938.

⁸⁶ Loke, 'Tyske Turister paany [German Tourists again]', *Dagens Nyheder*, June 14, 1935.

They were not seen at restaurants. On the other hand, they stormed the automate cafés [*automatkafeerne*]. The bravest would also seize the sidewalk cafés following the principle: if it is too expensive, one can leave.

As portrayed by the trenchant journalist, having to make five RM last was an art form perfectly mastered by the mass of German tourists, who, despite the worryingly high entrance fee, enjoyed themselves in Tivoli in the evening before embarking for Hamburg again, following the maxim: '*Kein Bier—und nicht zu viel essen, dann geht's!*' [No beer—and not too much food, then it works!].⁸⁷

While this portrayal was relatively subdued, other accounts were more strident. Predictably, the harshest words came from the Communist Party whose newspaper proclaimed that the decrease of travellers on board 'excursion ships' in the summer of 1937 was not regrettable, since these were German tourists arriving with only 'the famous 10 [Reich] Marks'.⁸⁸ The negative perception of German boat visitors was likely related to a more general image of the new phenomenon of large tourist ships docking in Copenhagen harbour. As part of the international shipping industry's response to the financial crisis, cruise ships emerged as an increasingly popular travel form in the early 1930s. 'The floating hotels' were often despised for not contributing economically to the city at which they anchored, as their passengers would often sleep and eat on board. This would at times lead to rather critical descriptions in the press, as was the case in the summer of 1937 when one daily, on the occasion of a particularly large presence of English cruise ships and using a not-so-subtle reference to the Battle of Copenhagen (1807), dryly remarked that 'the English prefer to conquer Copenhagen from the seaside'.⁸⁹ In 1933, another report noted that the large number of tourist ships was 'a dangerous competitor for the hotels of Copenhagen'. This threat was especially true of German craft whose passengers would not only sleep but also eat on board, or bring packed lunches.⁹⁰ The brevity of their stays did not lessen the negative reputation.⁹¹

The CTPA also discussed the topic. Here, the attitude toward 'floating hotels' struck a more appreciative note. At the committee's very first meeting, one member remarked that the commotion

⁸⁷ Unknown Author, '2200 Femkrone-Turister'.

⁸⁸ Unknown Author, 'Færre Turistskibe til København [Fewer Tourist Ships to Copenhagen]', *Arbejderbladet*, January 4, 1938.

⁸⁹ Unknown Author. "Opløb" af Turistskibe ved Langelinie ["Gathering" of Touristships at Langelinie]. *Hejmdal*, June 28, 1937.

⁹⁰ Unknown Author, 'Englænderne har atter indtaget København, men Amerika svigter [The English have once again conquered Copenhagen but the Americans are failing]', *Berlingske Politiske og Avertissementstidende*, July 27, 1933.

⁹¹ E.g. an article from 1933 in which a newspaper from Bornholm, an island whose tourist industry were dependent on German tourist to a large degree, lamented that it was only planned for future ships to stay on Bornholm for four hours at a time. See Unknown Author, 'Turistforbindelsen med Tyskland [The Tourist Connection with Germany]', *Bornholms Tidende*, July 5, 1933.

regarding tourist ships was unlikely to last, since the hotels were full anyway during the cruise ship season. The President of the Danish Association for Hotel and Restaurant Owners—another committee member—chimed in, agreeing that ‘the animosity against these ships has fallen away’.⁹² This newfound appreciation had staying power within TAD. At a meeting for local tourist association leaders held in 1939, a lecturer on the economic benefits of tourism remarked that ‘[i]n the beginning, this form of tourism caused grievances, but in reality these tourists are contributing a significant amount of money to the country’. He went on to repeat the argument that Copenhagen’s hotels were full during the season.⁹³ This sentiment found some resonance in the press. In 1936, the main Social Democratic newspaper cited a report from the state’s Statistical Department as well as the newly appointed Head of TAD’s Foreign Department, Mogens Lichtenberg, to conclude ‘it is not just petty cash which arrives in the country along with these [ship] tourists’.⁹⁴

Certainly, both the press and the officials of TAD frequently discussed the national economic aspects of tourism. Newspaper headlines such as ‘The Ship Tourist contributed more than 2 Million to Denmark’ and ‘Denmark—A Tourist Country. Tourist Visits from Abroad are among our most important Export Industries’ are exemplary.⁹⁵ TAD’s annual reports, as well, often touched upon the significance of tourism as an industry. In 1939, for example, it was reported that incomes related to foreign tourists had amounted to 36 million DKK in the preceding year, a doubling since 1933. Furthermore, this sum made tourism comparable to incomes related to ‘important export items’ such as seafood products (35.7 M), minerals (26.1 M), and living cattle (70.4 M).⁹⁶ Such arguments were central to the calls for increased attention to tourism from the state and the commercial sector as the voices calling for reform of the promotional efforts abroad intensified by the mid-1930s.⁹⁷ They were clearly also central to the way the Danish public perceived visiting Germans; when portrayed

⁹² ‘1st meeting’, 8-9, in *Mødereferater fra Udenrigsministeriets Udvalg*.

⁹³ Niels Banke, ‘Turismens økonomiske Betydning for Samfundet og Erhvervene [The Economic Significance of Tourism for Society and the Industries]’, in *Turistforeningen for Danmark [The Tourist Association for Denmark], En Samling Foredrag Holdt ved Turistforeningens Turistlederkursus 1938 [A Collection of Lectures given at the Tourist Association’s Tourist Leader Course 1938]*, 44-68 (Copenhagen: Kandrup & Wunsch Bogtrykkeri, 1939), 12.

⁹⁴ Unknown Author, ‘Skibsturisterne lagde over 2 Millioner i Danmark [The Ship Tourist contributed more than 2 Million to Denmark]’, *Social-Demokraten*, December 31, 1936; Earlier in 1936 a newspaper article in a Conservative daily referred to the high numbers of ship tourists arriving as being ‘a fairytale’. Unknown Author, ‘33.000 Turister hertil med 67 Kæmpedampere [33,000 Tourists arriving with 67 giant steamers]’, *Nationaltidende*, August 8, 1936.

⁹⁵ Ibid.; Unknown Author, ‘Danmark – Et Turistland [Denmark—A Tourist Country], *Horsens Folkeblad*, January 11, 1935.

⁹⁶ ‘Årsberetning 1939 [Annual Report 1939],’ 3-4, in 442, 07798, Årsberetninger 1924-1965, TD-RA.

⁹⁷ See particularly chapter 3 of Ørskov, ‘The Tourist Association for Denmark and Its Promotional Efforts in Nazi Germany’.

negatively, their meagre spending power was the primary justification.

Conclusion

The outbreak of the Second World War effectively stemmed the stream of German tourists flowing north into Denmark. Although those Germans serving there for the *Wehrmacht* largely perceived the country (which soldiers referred to as the *Sahnefront* [cream front]),⁹⁸ as a sort of holiday away from the war, regular tourism in Denmark was mostly restricted to Danes exploring their own country, especially by bike or on foot.

The war capped a decade in which tourism flourished and the ‘tremendous will to travel’ was not tamed by ideology. As this article has shown, it was economic concerns, especially in connection with Nazi currency policy that determined the tourist flows crossing the Danish-German border; the numbers of travellers was contingent upon the amount of currency German citizens were allowed to carry out of their country. To a large extent, travelling between the two countries continued as before; thus, this article underpins the work of scholars such as Semmens and Baranowski on tourism, and, more broadly, consumption, in Nazi Germany, highlighting the normality of everyday life, which served to lend legitimacy and political capital to the regime. Furthermore, the continuous availability of leisure trips arguably aligns with Wiesen’s notion of a ‘Nazi marketplace’; that is, the provision of consumable goods to those perceived as racially sound bolstered the political regime as well as its underlying ideal of the racial state.

While bolstering the Nazi project through an appeal to consumerism, the perceived economic advantages of tourism also trumped most potential ideological objections among those active in the industry. Throughout the decade, both before and after the rise of the National Socialists, Danish tourist officials worked in favour of state-negotiated bilateral arrangements to permit a continuous influx of German visitors. The willingness to undersign such agreements at the state level, an inclination shared with both Norwegian and Swiss officials among others,⁹⁹ proves the seriousness with which the Danish state took tourism in the 1930s as it struggled to ferret out sources of revenue amid the global economic crisis. Ideology was of secondary importance.

In the end, while ideology certainly was an impetus for the European-wide state-level embrace of leisure and travel programs in the 1930s, it did not shape the tourist experience in a hegemonic

⁹⁸ E.g. Christensen et. al., *Danmark Besat*, 352.

⁹⁹ Copy of correspondence between the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Public Works, 90-32 Dan (10/5), Diverse, UMGS.

fashion. Some tourists, such as the *Hitlerjugend* troop discussed above, did view the sights on their itineraries through an ideological ‘tourist gaze’ shaped by their own pre-conceptions.¹⁰⁰ It is a matter for further study whether or not the *Hitlerjugend* troop was typical of the ways German tourists more generally perceived foreign tourist sights during the Nazi years. Yet, in this essay, it is demonstrated that ideological issues were neither the main concern for most of the actors facilitating trips to Denmark nor were the visits overwhelmingly framed ideologically in the Danish press. It is striking that, albeit in somewhat different configurations, concerns related to the German visitors’ access to consumption facilitated positive attitudes towards border crossing tourism on both the Danish and German side and that most of the negative press coverage in the Danish press was related to the German guests’ relatively limited capacity for consumption.

This is not to say that ideology was unimportant. It did play a significant role in shaping the Nazi regime’s use of tourism to legitimise its rule, not to mention the nature of excursions and trips offered by some organisations such as the Nordic Society. Some portrayals of German tourists in the Danish press also reflect ideological considerations. None of this is to say that scholars should avoid studying what one might call trans-ideological tourism. On the contrary. It is precisely because ideological concerns did not hinder, and sometimes even furthered, trips on a relatively large scale across ideological divides that examining them might complement our understanding of life in Nazi Germany as well as the politics of tourism in democracies and authoritarian states. Such trips serve as a poignant reminder of the motley entanglements of German society with the rest of Europe, even under Nazism. Throughout the decade, and even on the eve of war, this study shows that Danish state and tourist officials sought ways to overcome barriers to perceived German autarky and to facilitate the continuous flow of tourism. While it was the Danish Foreign Ministry that conducted the formal negotiations with Germany, both tourist officials and the press encouraged agreements and closely followed how talks unfolded. Engaging with the non-ideological aspects of tourism in the interwar era, then, highlights the intricacies of interstate relations on the eve of war. The dynamics guiding and resulting from these entanglements undoubtedly deserve further study.

¹⁰⁰ The notion of the ‘tourist gaze’ was famously coined by John Urry. While he is ultimately more interested in the institutionalisation of certain ways of seeing tourist sights (broadly defined), he does note that ‘[t]he gaze [...] presupposes a system of social activities and signs which locate the particular tourist practices, not in terms of some intrinsic characteristics, but through the contrasts implied with non-tourist social practices [...]’. See John Urry, *The Tourist Gaze. Leisure and Travel in Contemporary Societies* (London; Newbury Park; New Dehli: Sage Publications, 1990), 2.